

The birds observed in February 2005 and February 2007, like that in January 2005, presumably came from south-west Europe, perhaps having joined groups of immature Eurasian Griffon Vultures that crossed the Strait of Gibraltar. Cinereous Vulture is an accidental visitor to Morocco, with a few records in Algeria and Tunisia (Isenmann & Moali 2000, Thévenot *et al.* 2003, Isenmann *et al.* 2005). A Cinereous Vulture ringed in Spain in November 1994 was found dead in Mali in February 1995 (Talamelli 2007).

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First records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis* and Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* for Madagascar

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Premières observations du Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis* et du Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus* à Madagascar. Un Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis* et un Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus* ont été photographiés le 1 et 20 octobre 2012, respectivement, entre Toliara et Ifaty, au sud-ouest de Madagascar. Ce sont les premières données pour le pays de ces espèces, qui nichent dans la région arctique.

On 1 October 2012, at c.09.00 hrs, a Rockjumper birding tour group led by CR was birding at a wetland between Toliara and Ifaty, in south-west Madagascar, when an interesting shorebird was seen foraging in a grassy patch. It superficially resembled a small Ruff *Calidris* (= *Philomachus*) *pugnax*, but it had a shorter,

straight black bill, a dark beady eye surrounded by a pale ring within an otherwise plain face, finely spotted breast-sides and yellow legs. Based on these features, the bird was identified as a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *C.* (= *Tryngites*) *subruficollis*. Some photographs were taken, one of which is reproduced here (Fig. 1). The bird continued to



Figure 1. Buff-breasted Sandpiper / Bécasseau roussâtre *Calidris subruficollis*, between Toliara and Ifaty, Madagascar, 1 October 2012 (Lee Hunter)



Figure 2. Red-necked Phalarope / Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus*, between Toliara and Ifaty, Madagascar, 28 October 2012 (David Hoddinott)

feed for *c.*15 minutes, during which close-range views were enjoyed by the group, before it flew away.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper breeds in the high Arctic of America and eastern Siberia, and winters mainly in southern South America (van Gils & Wiersma 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, there are scattered records of vagrants in Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Benin, Burundi, Kenya, Namibia and South Africa (Borrow & Demey 2001, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002, Hockey *et al.* 2005). In the western Indian Ocean, it has been recorded in Seychelles, with six records on five different islands in November–January and in March (Safford & Hawkins 2013).

On 28 October 2012, at *c.*15.00 hrs on a clear afternoon, another Rockjumper group comprising eight participants and DH (the guide) were birding at an extensive wetland along the same road, halfway between Toliara and Ifaty, when they spotted a phalarope swimming on the open water *c.*40 m away. On closer examination it was identified as a Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* in non-breeding plumage, a species DH is familiar with from South Africa, Namibia and Ghana. It had a distinct eye patch, a dark grey back streaked white, and a fairly long, slender, all-black bill without a yellow base, thus eliminating Red (Grey) Phalarope *P. fulicarius*. Its small size, prominent eye patch and a bill that was insufficiently long or slender, eliminated Wilson's Phalarope *Steganopus tricolor*. Several photographs were taken (Fig. 2). The bird continued feeding

in typical phalarope fashion, spinning around regularly and picking food from the water's surface, for the entire half-hour we were in the area.

Red-necked Phalarope breeds in the Arctic and spends the non-breeding season at sea, mainly off western South America, in the Arabian Sea and from Indonesia to western Melanesia (van Gils & Wiersma 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, it is locally common off Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998) and fairly common off Kenya, as well as being irregular inland on Rift Valley lakes north to Ethiopia (Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002, Ash & Atkins 2009). Along Africa's east coast and in the western Indian Ocean, vagrants have twice been recorded in Seychelles, both in November (Safford & Hawkins 2013), as well as south to KwaZuluNatal, South Africa (Hockey *et al.* 2005).

These are the first documented records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Red-necked Phalarope for Madagascar. They are not mentioned in the latest ABC checklist (Dowsett *et al.* 2013) or in Safford & Hawkins (2013).

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First record of Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* for Ghana

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Première observation du Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* au Ghana. Un Goéland d'Audouin *Ichthyaeetus audouinii* de premier hiver a été photographié à Muni Lagoon, à l'ouest de Winneba, Ghana, le 13 Janvier 2014. C'est la première donnée de cette espèce au sud de la Sénégalie.

On 13 January 2014, at c.17.00 hrs, at the southern end of Muni Lagoon, west of Winneba, Ghana, together with our local guide Kalu Afasi of Malimbe Tours, we were scanning the wetland, part of the Muni-Pomadze Ramsar site, with telescopes. AGK noted a medium-to large-sized gull with a large flock of Royal *Thalasseus maximus* and Sandwich Terns *T. sandvicensis* c.400–500 m away. We concluded that it was a first-winter (second calendar-year) Audouin's Gull *Ichthyaeetus audouinii*. Given that Borrow & Demeijer (2010) stated that the only similar-sized gull known to occur in Ghana was Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*, it was clear that we needed to obtain closer views and, if possible, photographic documentation. The bird eventually took flight with some of the terns and began flying around the lagoon. It occasionally came a little closer to us enabling AGK & RHC to take photographs, of which two are reproduced here (Figs. 1–2). However, as we had to return to Accra, we then had to leave the site.

Description

Medium-sized gull, with a distinctly long, pear-shaped head and a relatively long drooping bill, giving the bird a 'snout' appearance. The bill was greyish with a dark tip, further adding to the long-bodied appearance. Very obvious were the longish legs, which appeared dark blackish grey. The pale grey mantle and relatively small size immediately eliminated Lesser Black-backed Gull, which is the only regularly occurring large gull in Ghana. In flight the bird appeared relatively long- and narrow-winged compared to Lesser Black-backed Gull. At times it recalled a very large Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus* in appearance and structure. Head and breast whitish with brown mottling on the ear-coverts and upper breast, extending to the belly. In flight the upperparts were quite contrasting due to an overall mid-grey mantle, lesser and marginal wing-coverts, although these tracts were still heavily peppered with brown juvenile feathers. Primaries, primary-coverts, secondaries and most of the greater coverts were dark uniform brownish,